

Nazca Lines

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This Warden Message is to alert U.S. citizens that the U.S. Embassy in Lima has put the tours over the Nazca Lines in Nazca, Peru off-limits to its direct-hire personnel if the flights originate out of Nazca's Maria Reiche Airport. Air tours operating out of the Ica or Pisco airports are not off limits. This decision is taken because of the potential safety hazards of small commercial aircraft based at Maria Reiche airport in Nazca. The Embassy is aware of at least 10 different airplane emergencies resulting in 17 deaths since December 2007, most recently in October 2010. Other incidents included emergency landings on the Pan American highway and the hijacking of a plane by unknown individuals.

In the last three years, there have been numerous irregularities in safety and security procedures at Maria Reiche airport, including allowing aircraft to fuel by bucket instead of tanker truck, allowing passengers to board without passing through the airport or undergoing a security screening, allowing construction of buildings at the end of the runway, and a failure to install appropriate radar equipment. In addition, some of the small planes flying tourists over the Nazca Lines have been retrofitted to carry excess numbers of passengers, have been documented as lacking appropriate maintenance and have failed to carry sufficient fuel for alternate landing strips in emergencies. Because of these circumstances, the Nazca Lines flights were put off limits to US military personnel on liberty from a visiting naval aircraft carrier in April 2010.